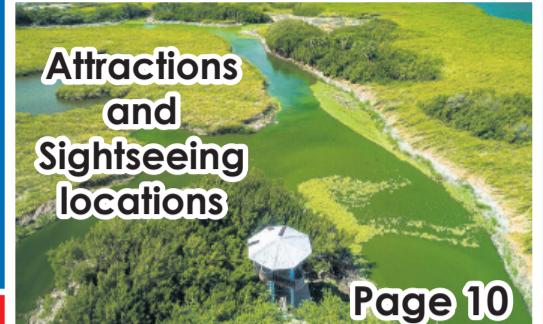


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Washington OKs 1st statewide missing Indigenous people alert

TULALIP, Wash. (AP) — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Thursday signed into law a bill that creates a first-in-the-nation statewide alert system for missing Indigenous people, to help address a silent crisis that has plagued Indian Country in this state and nationwide. The law sets up a system similar to Amber Alerts and so-called silver alerts, which are used respectively for missing children and vulnerable adults in many states. It was spearheaded by Democratic Rep. Debra Lekanoff, the only Native American lawmaker currently serving in the Washington state Legislature, and championed by Indigenous leaders statewide.

"I am proud to say that the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's and People's Alert System came from the voices of our Native American leaders," said Lekanoff, a member of the Tlingit tribe and the bill's chief sponsor. "It's not just an Indian issue, it's not just an Indian responsibility. Our sisters, our aunts, our grandmothers are going missing every day ... and it's been going on for far too long."

Tribal leaders, many of them women, wore traditional hats woven from cedar as they gathered around Inslee for the signing on the Tulalip Reservation, north of Seattle.

Continued on next page



Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, center, reaches for a pen as tribal leaders and other supporters applaud after he signed a bill that creates a first-in-the-nation statewide alert system for missing Indigenous people — particularly women, Thursday, March 31, 2022, in Quil Ceda Village, near Marysville, Wash., north of Seattle.

Associated Press

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Monie Ordona, second from left, of the Tulalip Indian Tribe, joins others in singing an honor song after Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill that creates a first-in-the-nation statewide alert system for missing Indigenous people — particularly women, Thursday, March 31, 2022, in Quil Ceda Village, near Marysville, Wash., north of Seattle.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

Afterward they gifted him with a handmade traditional ribbon shirt and several multicolored woven blankets.

The law attempts to address a crisis of missing Indigenous people — particularly women — in Washington and across the United States. While it includes missing men, women and children, a summary of public testimony on the legislation notes that "the crisis began as a women's issue, and it remains primarily a women's issue."

Besides notifying law enforcement when there's a report of a missing Indigenous person, the new alert system will place messages on highway reader boards and on the radio and social media, and provide information to the news media. The legislation was paired with another bill Inslee, a Democrat, signed Thursday that requires county coroners or medical examiners to take steps to identify and notify family members of murdered Indigenous people and return their remains. That new law also establishes two grant funds

for Indigenous survivors of human trafficking.

This piece of the crisis is important because in many cases, murdered Indigenous women are mistakenly recorded as white or Hispanic by coroners' offices, they're never identified, or their remains never repatriated.

A 2021 report by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office found the true number of missing and murdered Indigenous women in the U.S. is unknown due to reporting problems, distrust of law enforcement and jurisdictional conflicts. But Native American women face murder rates almost three times those of white women overall — and up to 10 times the national average in certain locations, according to a 2021 summary of the existing research by the National Congress of American Indians. More than 80% have experienced violence.

In Washington, more than four times as many Indigenous women go missing than white women, according to research conducted by the Urban In-

dian Health Institute in Seattle, but many such cases receive little or no media attention.

The bill signing began with a traditional welcome song passed down by Harriette Shelton Dover, a cherished cultural leader and storyteller. Dover recovered and shared many traditions and songs from tribes along Washington's northern Pacific Coast and worked with linguists before her death in 1991 to preserve her language, Lushootseed, from extinction. Women performed an honor song after the event. Tulalip Tribes of Washington Chairwoman Teri Gobin said Washington and Montana are the two states with the most missing Indigenous people in the U.S. Nearly four dozen Native people are currently missing in Seattle alone, she said.

"What's the most important thing is bringing them home, whether they've been trafficked, whether they've been stolen or murdered," she said. "It's a wound that stays open, and it's something that we pray with (for) each person, we can bring them home."

Investigations into missing Indigenous people, particularly women, have been plagued by many issues for decades.

When a person goes missing on a reservation, there are often jurisdictional conflicts between tribal police and local and state law enforcement. A lack of staff and police resources, and the rural nature of many reservations, compound those problems. And many times, families of tribal members distrust non-Native law enforcement or don't know where to report news of a missing loved one.

An alert system will help mitigate some of those problems by allowing better communication and coordination between tribal and non-tribal law enforcement and creating a way for law enforcement to flag such cases for other agencies. The law expands the definition of "missing endangered person" to include Indigenous people, as well as children and vulnerable adults with disabilities or memory or cognitive issues.

The law takes effect June

9 and some details are still being worked out. For example, it's unclear what criteria law enforcement will use to positively identify a missing person as Native American and how the information will be disseminated in rural areas, including on some reservations, where highways lack electronic reader boards — or where there aren't highways at all.

The measure is the latest step Washington has taken to address the issue. The Washington State Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force is working to coordinate a statewide response and had its first meeting in December. Its first report is expected in August.

Many states from Arizona to Oregon to Wisconsin have taken recent action to address the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women. Efforts include funding for better resources for tribal police to the creation of new databases specifically targeting missing tribal members.

Tribal police agencies that use Amber Alerts for missing Indigenous children include the Hopi and Las Vegas Paiute.

In California, the Yurok Tribe and the Sovereign Bodies Institute, an Indigenous-run research and advocacy group, uncovered 18 cases of missing or slain Native American women in roughly the past year in their recent work — a number they consider a vast undercount. An estimated 62% of those cases are not listed in state or federal databases for missing persons.

The law is already drawing attention from other states, whose attorney generals have called to ask how to enact similar legislation, said state Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who called the law "truly groundbreaking."

"Any time you're doing something for the first time in this country, that's an extra heavy lift," he said. "This most certainly will not be our last reform to make sure that we bring everybody back home. ... There is so much more work that needs to be done and must be done." □

U.S. will require valves on new pipelines to prevent disasters

By MATTHEW BROWN

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — U.S. officials on Thursday adopted a rule aimed at reducing deaths and environmental damage from oil and gas pipeline ruptures — a long-delayed response to fatal explosions and massive spills that have occurred over decades in California, Michigan, New Jersey and other states.

But safety advocates said the move by the U.S. Transportation Department would not have averted the accidents that prompted the new rule. That's because it applies only to new pipelines and not to hundreds of thousands of miles of lines that already criss-cross the country, many of them decades old and corroding.

The rule requires companies to install emergency valves that can quickly shut off the flow of oil, natural gas or other hazardous fuels when pipelines rupture. It came in response to a massive gas explosion in San Bruno, California, that killed eight people in 2010, and to large oil spills into Michigan's Kalamazoo River and Montana's Yellowstone River and other spills. The National Transportation Safety Board since the 1990s has recommended the use of automatic or remote controlled valves on large pipelines — whether they are existing or new — to reduce the severity of accidents. Following a 1995 gas pipeline explosion and fire that destroyed eight buildings in Edison, Jersey, the safety board urged the Transportation Department to expedite requirements for shut-off valves in cities and natural areas.

But pipeline companies for years resisted new valve requirements because of the expense of installing them and concerns they could close accidentally and shut off fuel supplies.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said the more stringent regulations for the industry were needed because too many people have been harmed by pipeline failures.

He said installation of the



In this July 6, 2011, photo, cleanup workers use oil absorbent materials along side the Yellowstone River in Laurel, Mont., to clean up an oil spill.

Associated Press

valves would also protect against large releases of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas blamed for helping drive climate change.

"Today we are taking an important step to protect communities against hazardous pipeline leaks — helping to save the lives, property, and jobs of people in every part of the country while preventing super-polluting methane leaks," Buttigieg said.

The Pipeline Safety Trust, a Bellingham, Washington-based advocacy group, said the rule marked progress since Congress mandated more stringent pipeline regulations over a decade ago.

But the group said exempting pipelines that are already in the ground means it would not prevent a repeat of the accident at San Bruno, which involved a pipeline that was more than 50 years old.

"This rule falls far short of the NTSB recommendation and will offer no additional safety to communities living near existing pipelines," said Bill Caram, executive director of the safety trust.

The government estimated it would cost a combined \$5.9 million annually for companies to comply with Thursday's rule. By comparison, industry representatives said a single valve

on an existing line could cost up to \$1.5 million and it would take billions of dollars to retrofit lines nationwide.

Industry representatives were closely involved in crafting the rule. Their request to allow valves to be more widely spaced along pipelines and remove the requirement for some low-

risk pipes was rejected. However, transportation officials adopted some of industry recommendations that will give operators latitude to make adjustments to where valves are placed.

Association of Oil Pipe Lines Vice President John Strody said the final rule still contains "arbitrary re-

quirements" for pipeline operators that don't reflect real-world operating conditions or the low risk of spills in some scenarios.

Amy Andryszak, president of the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, said her organization and companies it represents were still reviewing the rule but were "generally supportive" of rules that encourage safety.

Experts say automatic valves can help eliminate some human-caused errors that contribute to accidents, such as a delay of more than 17 hours to confirm the 2010 Kalamazoo, Michigan, pipeline rupture because workers ignored alarms indicating a possible spill. The break released more than 800,000 gallons (3,600,000 liters) of crude oil and caused roughly \$1 billion in property and environmental damage.

In San Bruno, a 30-inch (76-centimeter) gas pipeline exploded and burned like a massive blowtorch in a suburban California neighborhood for 89 minutes before a manual valve was used to shut it down. □

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7 hurt in Arkansas tornado as storms move into Deep South

Associated Press

Severe storms that included at least two confirmed tornadoes injured several people Wednesday, damaged homes and businesses and downed power lines in Mississippi and Tennessee after they spread damage in Arkansas, Missouri and Texas overnight before moving to the Deep South. No deaths had been reported from the storms as of Wednesday evening, officials said.

About 185,000 customers were without electricity Thursday morning in the wake of the storm along a band of states: Mississippi and Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio and Michigan, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utilities.

But widespread damage was reported in the Jackson, Tennessee, area as a tornado warning was in effect. "Significant damage" occurred to a nursing home near Jackson-Madison County General Hospital and the Madison County Sheriff's Office in Jackson, said Madison County Emergency Management Director Jason Moore.

In Nashville, Tennessee, paneling fell five stories from the side of a down-



The Mississippi Department of Transportation digital message board warns drivers along I-55 southbound in Jackson of a tornado warning during a rainstorm during the outbreak of severe weather in the state, Wednesday, March 30, 2022.

town hotel Wednesday evening and onto a roof of a building below. The fire department warned the debris could become airborne as high winds continued, and some hotel guests were moved to other parts of the building due to concerns that the roof would become unstable. No injuries were immediately associated with the collapse. A warehouse roof collapsed as the storms moved

through Southaven, Mississippi, near Memphis, police said. The building had been evacuated and no injuries were reported. The Mississippi Senate suspended its work as weather sirens blared during a tornado watch in downtown Jackson. Some employees took shelter in the Capitol basement.

Rander P. Adams said his and his wife, Janice Delores Adams, were in their home

near downtown Jackson when severe weather blew through during a tornado warning Wednesday afternoon. He said their lights flashed and they heard a loud whistling noise. As his wife tried to open their front door, a large window exploded a few feet from her.

"The glass broke just as if someone threw a brick through it," he said. "I advised her then, 'Let's go to

Associated Press

the back of the house."

Adams said the storm toppled trees in a nearby park, and a large tree across the street from their house split in half. "We were blessed," he said. "Instead of falling toward the house, it fell the other way."

Earlier Wednesday, a tornado that struck Springdale, Arkansas, and the adjoining town of Johnson, about 145 miles (235 kilometers) northwest of Little Rock, about 4 a.m. injured seven people, two critically, said Washington County, Arkansas, Emergency Management Director John Luther. He had no additional information about them.

The National Weather Service said that tornado would be rated "at least EF-2," which would mean wind speeds reached 111-135 mph (178-217 kph).

"Search and rescue teams have been deployed, as there are significant damages and injuries," Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson said.

In northwest Missouri, an EF-1 tornado with wind speeds around 90 mph (145 kph) struck St. Joseph on Tuesday night, according to the weather service. That tornado damaged two homes, but no injuries were reported there. □

Defrocked priest, 84, gets house arrest for lying to FBI



Attorneys Dan Monahan, at podium, and Marcia Hamilton, center right, take part during a news conference with the family of Sean McIlmail, brother Michael McIlmail, left, mother Debbie McIlmail, second right, and sister Kaitlyn McIlmail Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

By MARYCLAIRE DALE

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — An 84-year-old defrocked

priest was sentenced to five years of probation for lying to the FBI about whether he knew a former altar boy

and his family.

Robert Brennan, of Perryville, Maryland, was ordered to spend the first two years on house arrest. Under a plea agreement, he admitted he lied to the FBI when agents visited his home in 2019 as part of a broader federal probe of priest abuse in Pennsylvania.

Brennan had been named in more than 20 abuse complaints during his long church career, and Philadelphia prosecutors charged him in 2013 with raping former altar boy Sean McIlmail in 1998. However, those charges were dropped when the 26-year-old McIlmail died of a drug overdose before trial. His family instead filed a civil

lawsuit against the Archdiocese after his death, and settled for an undisclosed amount.

When federal investigators examined the issue, and visited Brennan, he said he did not know McIlmail despite pictures of them together.

The McIlmails, who attended Thursday's sentencing, said they were disappointed but not surprised given the plea agreement that Brennan reached with prosecutors last year.

"I'm disappointed because it just continues to show how the church and the courts are not in favor of the victim," said Debbie McIlmail of Willow Grove, Sean's mother, who hoped Brennan would get at least

some jail time.

Still, she said, "it was the first time we had an opportunity to face him and read an impact statement."

A public defender representing Brennan did not immediately return messages seeking comment Thursday.

In Pennsylvania alone, at least four prosecutors have conducted sweeping investigations into child sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic church, only to find most complaints too old to lead to charges.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are the victims of sexual assault without their permission, which Debbie McIlmail granted on her son's behalf. □

U.K. still struggling to address Windrush scandal failings

By DANICA KIRKA

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. government agency that oversees immigration is still struggling to address many of the problems that upended the lives of thousands of people of Caribbean descent wrongly targeted as illegal migrants, an independent reviewer said Thursday, more than four years after the scandal rocked Britain.

The reviewer, Wendy Williams, made that assessment in a report on how the Home Office responded to her original inquiry into the Windrush scandal. "Institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness" surrounding the issue of race were partly responsible for the scandal, Williams said in a 2020 report that made 30 recommendations for improving the agency.

While much progress has been made, the Home Office has failed to implement some of the most important recommendations, including improved training on issues of race, hiring more senior staff members from minority ethnic communities and increasing outside scrutiny of the agency, Wil-



A demonstrator takes part in the annual Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations march, in Brixton, London, on Aug. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

liams said.

"The department is at a tipping point," Williams said. "It can maintain its momentum and drive the initiatives forward to achieve the systemic and cultural changes required ... or it can settle for a situation where it loses impetus, direction and focus, in which event it runs the risk that it may only be a matter of time before it

faces another 'difficult outcome.'

The Windrush scandal came to light in 2018, when Britain's news media uncovered stories about long-term legal residents from the Caribbean who were wrongly caught up in a Home Office crackdown on illegal immigrants. Thousands lost jobs, homes and the right to free medical

care, many because they arrived as children and couldn't produce paperwork proving their right to live in the U.K. Some were detained, and an unknown number were deported to countries they barely remembered.

The scandal gets its name from the Windrush Generation of immigrants who came to the U.K. in response

to a government call for people from throughout the British Empire to help rebuild the country after World War II.

A program designed to compensate victims of the scandal has been slow to process applications amid complaints that the Home Office shouldn't be responsible for resolving the claims from the people it mistreated. The Home Office in December acknowledged the "slow start" but said it had overhauled the program to make it simpler and faster.

Home Secretary Priti Patel embraced Williams' latest report, saying she was "pleased" with what the agency has achieved over the past two years.

"Having said that, there is more to do, and I will not falter in my commitment to everyone who was affected by the Windrush scandal," she said in a statement. "Many people suffered terrible injustices at the hands of successive governments and I will continue working hard to deliver a Home Office worthy of every community we serve." □

First Nations meet with pope over Canada school abuses

By NICOLE WINFIELD

ROME (AP) — Drums pounded through the frescoed halls of the Apostolic Palace on Thursday and out into St. Peter's Square as Pope Francis welcomed a First Nations delegation seeking an apology for the Catholic Church's role in running Canada's notorious residential schools.

Francis met privately for two hours with the representatives of the Assembly of First Nations, following his meetings earlier in the week with delegations from the Metis and Inuit communities of Canada.

"I feel the pope and the church have expressed a sentiment of working toward reconciliation," said Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty of the Creen Nation, after the audience.

The trip was years in the making but gained mo-

mentum last year after the discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves outside some of the residential schools.

More than 150,000 native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools from the 19th century until the 1970s in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes and culture. The aim was to Christianize and assimilate them into mainstream society, which previous Canadian governments considered superior.

Even before the grave sites were discovered, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission specifically called for a papal apology to be delivered on Canadian soil for the church's role in the abuses against the Indigenous.

Francis has committed

to traveling to Canada, though no date for such a visit has been announced. The Vatican said Thursday's meeting was held "in a climate of listening and closeness" and would be followed by Francis' audience with all three groups on Friday, when he is to deliver a public address.

"If you were to ask me am I optimistic leaving our discussion with the Holy Father, I am," said Phil Fontaine, who was national chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 2009 when he led an Indigenous delegation to meet with Pope Benedict XVI.

At the time, Benedict only expressed his "sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the church." But he did not apologize.

"It's 2022, I'm back, for another shot at ... convincing



Members of the Assembly of First Nations sing a traditional song outside St. Peter's Square as their delegation is meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican, Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Associated Press

Pope Francis to apologize," Fontaine told reporters in St. Peter's Square, wearing a feathered headdress. "A full apology for all that he heard today and probably heard from the Metis and Inuit delegations about the horrible experience of too many of our people that at-

tended residential schools." "Our preference is for the Holy Father to come to Canada and apologize on Canadian soil, and do it on one of our territories," he added. "That is our hope and wish and we made that very clear to the Holy Father." □

Israel raids West Bank, 2 Palestinians killed in gunbattle

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli forces raided a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, setting off a gunbattle in which two Palestinians were killed and 15 were wounded, as Israel targeted what it said were militant networks after a series of deadly attacks. In a separate incident, a Palestinian stabbed a 28-year-old Israeli man on a bus in the West Bank before being killed by a bystander, the military said. The Magen David Adom emergency service said the stabbing victim was treated and taken to a hospital.

Videos circulated online showing smoke rising from the center of the Jenin refugee camp as gunfire echoed in the background. Others appeared to show Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen moving through the narrow streets.

The raid came two days after a Palestinian from a village near Jenin shot and killed five people in central Israel, part of a wave of attacks in recent days that have left a total of 11 people dead.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said 17-year-old Sanad Abu Atiyeh and 23-year-old



Palestinian gunmen shoot in the air during the funerals for Sanad Abu Atiyeh, 17 and Yazid al-Saadi, 23, in the West Bank refugee camp of Jenin, Jenin, Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Associated Press

Yazid al-Saadi were killed on Thursday. It said 30-year-old Nidal Jaafara was shot and killed near the West Bank town of Bethlehem, apparently referring to the stabbing incident. The Israeli military said troops came under fire after entering Jenin to arrest three suspects linked to Tuesday's attack. It said one soldier was wounded and evacuated to a hospital for treatment. The army said it has arrested a total

of 31 suspects in recent West Bank raids aimed at preventing more attacks. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office later Thursday announced it was spending about \$56 million in emergency funding for more police officers and equipment. "A strong police equals a strong Israel," Bennett said in a statement. "We are operating all means and on all fronts to restore security and a feeling of safety to

the people of Israel." The Jenin refugee camp was the scene of one of the deadliest battles of the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising. In April 2002, Israeli forces fought Palestinian militants in the camp for nearly three weeks. Twenty-three Israeli soldiers and at least 52 Palestinians, including civilians, were killed, according to the U.N. The Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the occupied West Bank

and coordinates with Israel on security matters, appears to have had little control over Jenin in recent years. Israeli forces operating in and around the city and refugee camp often come under fire.

The Islamic Jihad militant group announced a "general mobilization" of its fighters after Thursday's raid.

In Tuesday's attack, a 27-year-old Palestinian from the West Bank village of Yabad, near Jenin, methodically gunned down victims, killing five. On Sunday night, two Islamic State group sympathizers shot and killed two police officers in the central city of Hadera. Last week, a combined car-ramming and stabbing attack in the southern city of Beersheba — also by an IS-inspired attacker — killed four. The two attacks claimed by IS were carried out by Arab citizens of Israel.

President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Wednesday to express his condolences, saying the U.S. "stands firmly and resolutely with Israel in the face of this terrorist threat and all threats," according to the White House. □

Search finds 49,000 pieces of plane in China Eastern crash



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, rescuers carry a piece of plane wreckage from the China Eastern flight crash site in Tengxian County, southern China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on March 25, 2022.

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese officials said Thursday that the search for wreckage in last week's crash of a China Eastern Boeing 737-800 is basically done and that

more than 49,000 pieces of debris had been found. Flight MU5735 plunged from 29,000 feet (8,800 meters) into a mountainside in southern China's Guangxi

region, killing all 132 people on board. The impact created a 20-meter- (65-foot-) deep crater, set off a fire in the surrounding forest and smashed the plane into small parts scattered over a wide area, some of them buried underground.

Zhu Tao, the director of aviation safety for the Civil Aviation Administration of China, said at a news conference in the nearby city of Wuzhou that important parts including the horizontal stabilizer, engine and remains of the right wing tip had been recovered after nearly 10 days of searching, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. The investigation into the cause of the crash faces several challenges including that the plane plunged without warning, air traf-

fic controllers got no reply from the pilots after it started falling and the pieces of debris are so small.

More than 22,000 cubic meters (800,000 cubic feet) of soil were excavated and 49,117 pieces of the plane found, said Zhang Zhiwen, an official with the Guangxi government. The search was made more difficult by rain and muddy conditions in the remote and steep location.

The two "black boxes" — the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder — have been found and sent to Beijing for examination and analysis. Zhu said a preliminary investigation report would be completed within 30 days of the March 21 crash.

A team of U.S. investigators from the National Transpor-

tation Safety Board and advisors from Boeing and the Federal Aviation Administration have been granted visas to travel to China to take part in the investigation, under longstanding international agreements.

Engine manufacturer CFM will support the investigation but not send anyone to China, the NTSB said, correcting an earlier announcement that company representatives would be part of the traveling team. The China Eastern flight, with 123 passengers and nine crew members, was headed from the southwestern city of Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, to Guangzhou, a major city and export manufacturing hub near Hong Kong in southeastern China. □

Brazil officials resign to seek new posts, boost Bolsonaro

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) —

Members of President Jair Bolsonaro's Cabinet have left the administration en masse to help boost the Brazilian leader's reelection chances by supporting him as they campaign for congressional seats and governorships.

Ten ministers left their positions Thursday, along with three other top officials, according to the official gazette. They are expected to campaign for office ahead of October's general elections and stump for Bolsonaro. Top officials must resign in order to run for other positions, per electoral law. "I'm in my third straight administration, and I never saw a team of ministers so connected to the president, so loyal, so devoted," outgoing Infrastructure Minister Tarcísio de Freitas said at an event organized for the officials on Thursday. Outgoing Defense Minister Walter Braga Netto was made a special advisor to the president. He is seen as a top contender to become Bolsonaro's running mate.

The shake-up is an important step toward the hotly anticipated election expected to pit Bolsonaro against his political nemesis, former President Luiz In-



Outgoing, top, and incoming, bottom, government officials pray with their right hand raised for the protection of Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, center, who stands with his wife Michelle Bolsonaro, during a ceremony at Planalto presidential palace, in Brasilia, Brazil, Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Associated Press

ácio Lula da Silva, political analysts said. Even though the regional and presidential campaigns don't officially begin until August, both politicians have already begun holding large events.

Most outgoing officials have joined the same centrist Liberal Party that Bolsonaro joined in November. In the coming months, they will promote their achievements as well as those of the administration in some of Brazil's farthest reaches, according to Carlos Melo,

a political science professor at Insper University in São Paulo.

"Campaigning in a country this size is difficult; you need people to help with that," said Melo, noting that Latin America's largest nation has 27 states and more than 5,000 municipalities. "Their effort backs the president's own reelection effort."

Polls have consistently shown far-right Bolsonaro trailing well behind leftist da Silva in a head-to-head runoff that is likely to follow

the October vote. Pollster Datafolha shows da Silva leading by about 20 percentage points. While that is a smaller margin than in prior months, Bolsonaro will need all the help he can get to close the gap given more than 12 million people are unemployed, inflation is running above 10% and fuel prices are surging. Until campaigns officially begin in August, Brazil's electoral laws forbid potential candidates from asking for votes directly, but doesn't prohibit events that

resemble campaign rallies.

On Saturday, da Silva participated in an event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of Brazil. He told the crowd he believed the electorate will remove Bolsonaro from office in 2022. For his part, Bolsonaro has made more than 20 trips around the country while launching programs and public works in the first three months of the year, according to his official agenda.

On Sunday, the president addressed thousands of supporters in the capital, Brasilia, which many observers characterized as the unofficial launch of his campaign. The event introduced the slogan "Bolsonaro, the people's captain," and a video displayed archive images from the president's life for cheering supporters dressed in the green and yellow colors of the Brazilian flag. Some hopped on stage to take selfies with the president.

Speaking at Thursday's event, Bolsonaro, a former army captain, started by celebrating the legacy of the two-decade military dictatorship on the anniversary of the 1964 coup. Then he lauded his Cabinet for its work since he took office in 2019. □

Armenia, Azerbaijan leaders to meet amid recent fighting

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) —

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Thursday he will meet with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Brussels next week to lay the groundwork for peace talks to end the decades-long conflict over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The two leaders will meet in Brussels on April 6 with European Council President Charles Michel.

There have been recent clashes that have raised concerns about the stability of a cease-fire that ended the 2020 war over the separatist region.

"I hope to discuss at this meeting with the president of Azerbaijan and agree

on all issues related to the start of negotiations on a peace agreement," Pashinyan told a government meeting Thursday. He said Armenia "is ready for the immediate start of peace negotiations."

Fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces reigned in Nagorno-Karabakh this month, and three soldiers in the breakaway region were killed last week.

More than 6,600 people were killed in the six-week war in 2020 that ended with Azerbaijan reclaiming control over large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas that the Armenia-backed separatists controlled.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have been locked in a decades-old dispute over the separatist region, which lies within Azerbaijan but was under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. The cease-fire in 2020 was mediated by Russia, which then sent some 2,000 troops it called peacekeepers to the region.

Tensions on the two nations' shared border have been building since May, when Armenia protested what it described as an incursion by Azerbaijani troops into its territory. Azerbaijan has insisted that its soldiers were deployed to what it considers its territory in areas



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, attends talks with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, second left, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, left, at the Kremlin in Moscow, on Jan. 11, 2021.

Associated Press

where the border has yet to be demarcated.

Clashes have been reported ever since, and they in-

tensified this month as Russia became increasingly bogged down in its invasion of Ukraine. □

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Aqua Grill restaurant: The taste of New England with Caribbean flair



ORANJESTAD — One thing is for certain: Chef Scott Scheuerman and his team are famous for getting people hooked, just like the fish on your plate. You will get the taste of home fused with Caribbean while dining in elegance. Scheuerman will tell how Aqua Grill established its name since opening in 2002, and why it reaped accolades from such prestigious travel pub-

lications as Fodor's, who says, "This hip restaurant is heaven on earth for seafood lovers, who will find fresh fish galore..." Now is your chance to taste Aqua Grill's NEW seasonal menu and create a lifetime culinary memory.

'A Scheuer thing'

Secretly, we all know that the success of a restaurant begins in the kitchen. That is

where the chef creates his magic and for Aqua Grill the culinary team has won an assortment of awards for their continuous delivery of 'haute-cuisine del mar.' Classic seafood is mingled with contemporary ideas resulting in surprising dishes that soon made the restaurant a must-dine, confirmed by established travel media specialists like Fodor's and Frommer's.

American-born Scheuerman, executive chef of Aqua Grill, is thrilled about 'his restaurant'. "We started out as a New England style seafood restaurant, patterned after Boston style. But we quickly blended into some Caribbean, local flair... if you will. We do still offer the traditional



New England dishes like whole Maine lobster, northern seafood plates like the salmon, tuna and swordfish. We buy also from the local fisherman to offer Caribbean dishes like snapper and grouper which are number one sellers in our restaurant being the most prevalent local fishes. Catches like wahoo, mahi mahi and brasil are welcome too, anything that comes out of the water we embrace."

Sublime menu

Now is the time to indulge in Aqua Grill's dinner experience. The established restaurant offers a sensational menu. We present to you a Raw Bar with among others fresh Oysters on the half Shell, Little Neck Clams, Peruvian Ceviche and Lobster Salad. Steamed Dumplings and Prawns or Steamed Mussels seduce you from the open view kitchen.

After that continue your gastronomic trip to heaven with the house specialties like Main Lobster, steamed or broiled or maybe you crave for the best Alaska King Crab Legs you have ever tasted?

You haven't reached your destination yet because there are more main course options to blow you away: Seared Chilean Sea Bass, Cioppino or Blackened Tuna are just some to mention.

Take a pick out of Aqua Grill's delicious desserts to finally conclude yes, this beats it all. We will be back for more.□

Aqua Grill

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Honoring of loyal visitors at Divi Phoenix



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emer-

old Ambassador".

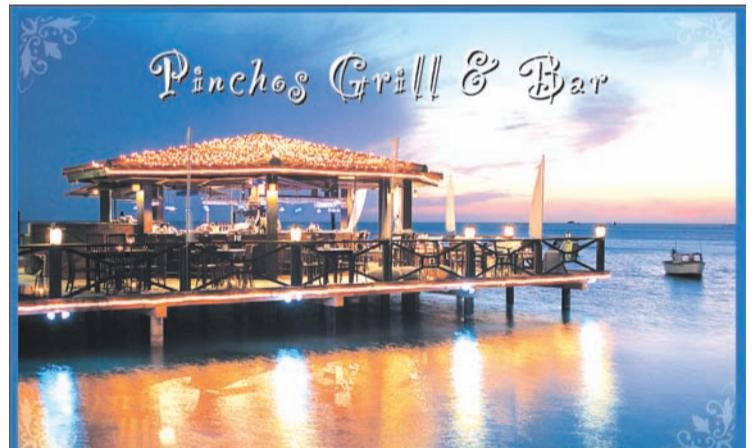
The honorees are: Randy and Judy Zamarron from Michigan, USA, who have been honored as Goodwill Ambassadors at their home away from home.

The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 consecutive years each title

carries.

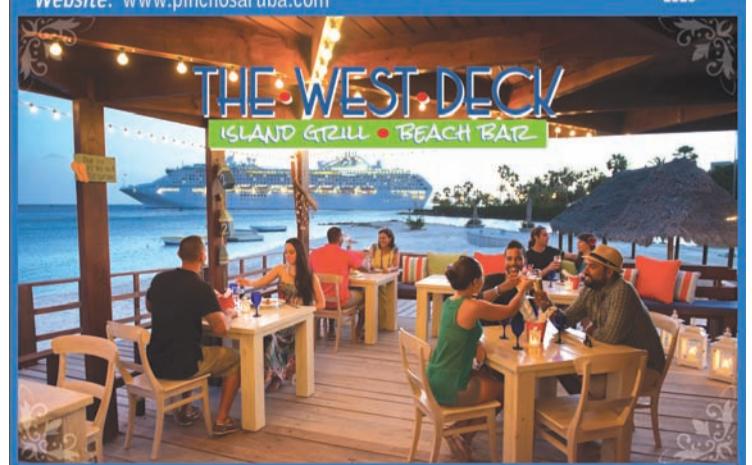
The couple loves coming to the island for its warm weather, beautiful beaches and friendly people.

Heyliger together with the representatives of Divi Village presented the certificates to the honorees and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



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Representatives of Aruba Open Beach Tennis meet with the Minister of Sport in preparation for Aruba Open Beach Tennis in November 2022

Oranjestad - The Minister of Sport Endy Croes had a meeting with Sr. Sjoerd de Vries and Sr. Mark Kiezebrink of Beach Tennis Aruba.

Sr. de Vries has the project of beach tennis close to Eagle Beach beside Eagle Resort. Sr. de Vries and Sr. Kiezebrink are the powering motors that organize the famous event known as Aruba Open Beach Tennis, which is the biggest sport event in not only Aruba but also the Caribbean.

Since 2020, because of the pandemic of Covid-19 they were unable to continue with the event, recently there has been a lot



of interest in organizing the

championship one more

time in November of this

year. The official continued

expressing that he under-

stands there are more than

a thousand athletes in the sport of beach tennis and who will be in Aruba participating in different categories.

The representatives of Aruba Beach Tennis asked for support and that some attention be paid to the area in which the championship will be held, and that the beach be prepared accordingly. The Minister assured that through DOW the necessary connections and preparations will be made and that they can count on the government's support for this project.

Aruba Open Beach Tennis is gearing up and promises to be a grand event. □

Attractions and Sightseeing locations in Aruba

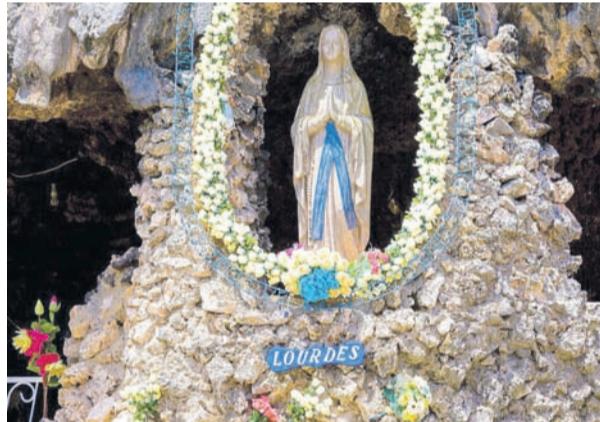


ORANJESTAD — There are enough sightseeing locations on the island to fill up a month-long vacation. Aruba's beaches are a big attraction, and although it's great to spend long days just relaxing on the beach and listening to the ocean, there are also plenty of opportunities to get to know Aruba's most attractive sights, historical and natural attractions, and museums. Check out these attractions you don't want to miss!

Blue Horses in Downtown, Oranjestad

This series of 8 sculptures were created by native Aruban artist Osaira Muyale. She named the project Paarden Baai, which translates to "Horse Bay". The statues were installed in 2015 and pay homage to the rich history of Aruba's horse trading industry. In the 17th Century Aruba was used by many countries (Europe, South America, Caribbean islands, and the Mediterranean) as a trading post. The most popular being cattle and horse trading. Horses were once the most important sources of livelihood for Aruba.

For 4 centuries the horse and cattle trade ran strong. At any given time Aruba was home to herds of thousands of horses that roamed the island. Aruba being the perfect trading post en-



couraged an extremely diverse culture and is the reason almost all Arubans speak more than 1 or 2 languages.

Each of the 8 bright royal blue horses is unique and carries its own name and personality. Pictured above is the mare Sinforsa, but you can also find Saturnina, Escapia, Rosalina, Eufrosina, Ambrosio, Bonifacia, and Celestina. The sculptures embody strength, nobility, grace, beauty and freedom. They represent the historical moment where the horses jumped from the ship decks into the Caribbean and swam to the Aruban Bay.

When you visit Aruba be sure to explore downtown Oranjestad and try to find all 8!

The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas.

A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and



can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location.

Bubali Bird Sanctuary

Watch more than 80 species of migratory birds from the Bubali watch tower, overlooking their resting and breeding area. The observation tower allows birdwatchers to get a true birds' eye view. Migratory birds, looking for lush vegetation in which to nest, find an oasis within the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. The nearby water treatment facility empties into two inter-connected man-made bird ponds. Birds that inhabit the sanctuary include herons, egrets, gulls, skimmers, coots, ducks and more. Located within walking distance of the Palm Beach resorts, the Bubali Bird Sanctuary offers some unique bird watching opportunities. You can't miss it as it is located just in front of the historical Old Dutch Windmill. Make sure to bring your camera as many of these birds will randomly fly by the observation tower giving a little show. This is a great place to bring kids for a unique and possibly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be so close to the untamed.

The happiest island in the Caribbean is so much more than just sun, sand and sea. □

In Your Debt: Forget the Fed, pay off your credit card debt

By SARA RATHNER of Nerd-Wallet

The cost of everything keeps creeping up. And if you happen to have credit card debt, that's about to get a bit more expensive too, thanks to a series of interest rate increases beginning this month.

With inflation at its highest rate since the early 1980s, the Federal Reserve is adjusting interest rates to hopefully restabilize the U.S. economy. In short, the Fed changes the federal funds rate, which alters the prime rate — that's the rate banks charge customers with high credit ratings. Credit card issuers add onto the prime rate to set their interest rates, so when the prime rate goes up, so does what you'll pay when you're in debt.

Got all that? Great. Now forget what you just read and pay attention to this part: If you have significant credit card debt, it doesn't really matter what the Fed is doing. Your credit card debt has always been, and will continue to be, expensive.

THE TRUE COST OF CREDIT CARD DEBT OVER TIME

If you have a \$5,000 balance remaining on your credit card from month



Credit cards as seen Thursday, July 1, 2021, in Orlando, Fla.

to month, and your interest rate is 16%, you'll spend \$800 in interest over the course of a year. If your interest rate increases to 16.25%, that translates to only an extra \$13 in interest over a year. Technically, that means it's not so much a rate hike as it is a gentle uphill slope. But \$800 was already a lot, and that's without accounting for the fact that you'll still need to spend additional money you might not be able to

pay back. The bills don't stop just because you're in debt. This is why squeezing a stress ball while watching the news isn't helpful in this case. What is helpful is facing money issues head-on. "The hardest part is ripping off the Band-Aid and really just adding up the numbers to see how much you owe," says Akeiva Ellis, a certified financial planner and founder of The Bemused, a financial literacy brand for

young adults. "But if you're able to make it to that point, it's really all about making a plan. Don't let your debt overwhelm you. The sooner you can face the numbers and devise a plan to pay it down, the easier you'll breathe."

HOW YOU CAN PAY LESS INTEREST

— SHOP AROUND FOR BETTER DEALS: The average U.S. FICO score increased to 716 by August 2021, and that increase was more preva-

lent for those with lower credit scores. (FICO scores of 690 or higher are considered good credit.) "It may happen that when you applied for the account that you have, your credit score was lower," says Bruce McClary, senior vice president of communications at the National Foundation for Credit Counseling. He recommends checking your credit report and score to see whether you've moved into a higher score range. If that's the case, you may be able to negotiate a better interest rate on your credit card.

— CONSOLIDATE YOUR DEBTS:

That higher credit score might also make you eligible for a balance transfer credit card with a no-interest promotional period, or a lower-interest personal loan. These can both give you a reprieve from high interest, but note that it depends on the terms you can qualify for. And in the case of balance transfer cards, the interest rate will go right back up once the 0% period ends.

— REVISIT YOUR BUDGET:

The more money you can apply toward your monthly credit card payment, the sooner you can get out of debt. □

Facebook resorts to old smear tactics against TikTok

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON

Eleven years ago, Facebook was caught red-handed after it hired a prominent public relations firm to try to plant stories harshly criticizing Google's privacy practices in leading news outlets.

In 2018, it hired the PR firm Definers to do opposition research on the company's critics, including billionaire philanthropist George Soros. The company's long-time head of communications, Elliot Schrage, took the blame for approving the hiring of Definers and similar firms and left Facebook.

On Wednesday, The Washington Post reported that Meta, Facebook's parent company, is using similar

tactics to go after another rival TikTok. Meta, the Post reported, hired a Republican consulting firm called Targeted Victory to "orchestrate a nationwide campaign" against TikTok. Targeted Victory, according to the Post, contracted with dozens of public relations firms across the U.S. to help "sway public opinion against TikTok" by planting local news stories and helping place op-eds targeting TikTok around the country, the story says.

Meta confirmed that it has hired Targeted Victory. "We believe all platforms, including TikTok, should face a level of scrutiny consistent with their growing success," spokesman Andy Stone said in a statement. Zac Moffatt, the CEO of

Targeted Victory, said the company "manages bipartisan teams on behalf of our clients."

"It is public knowledge we have worked with Meta for several years and we are proud of the work we have done," he said in a statement. The Post obtained internal emails from Targeted Victory that outlined a campaign to undermine TikTok, which is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. The firm used a mix of "genuine concerns and unfounded anxieties" about TikTok in order to try to turn public and political sentiment against it.

According to the report, Targeted Victory was also working to get "proactive coverage" about Facebook into local media, in-



Facebook's Meta logo sign is seen at the company headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., on Oct. 28, 2021.

Associated Press

cluding "submitting letters and opinion pieces speaking glowingly of Facebook's role in, for instance, supporting Black-owned businesses."

"We are deeply concerned

that the stoking of local media reports on alleged trends that have not been found on the platform could cause real world harm," TikTok said in an emailed statement. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 45 Yorkshire

1 Dominant city

6 Clambake 46 So far setting

11 Sophia of "Two Women"

12 Plentiful

13 In the know

14 Second airing

15 Pasture group

17 Umbrella parts

18 Night fliers

20 Milky gem

22 Peyton's brother

23 Like December

26 Tropical lizard

28 Find darling

29 Checkout device

31 Dressing part

32 Lewd look

33 Hoof sound

34 — California

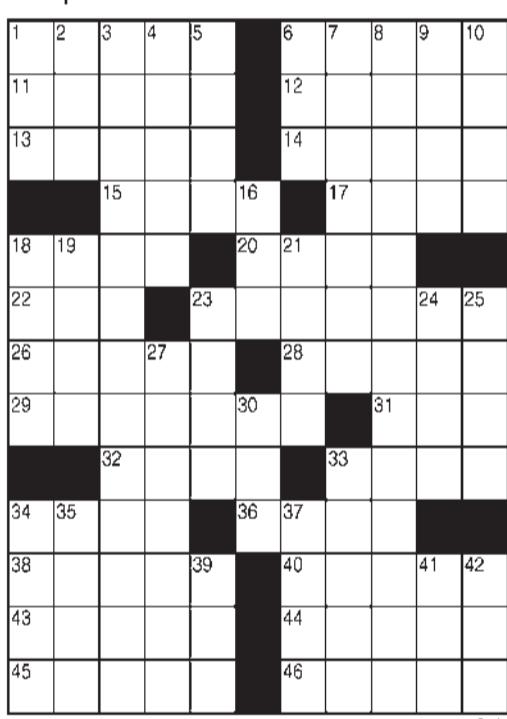
36 Singer Tori

38 Battery end

40 River of Pakistan

43 Comic strip worker

44 Stop

**Yesterday's answer**

4-1

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-1**CRYPTOQUOTE**

H P V C W S B Q G B I Z B Q A D G

F U E V O B W X G L G V X O I G P B U C

Z L W V W Z I W D V L W E V B W S

M E G D . — O G W I O G U Z F P A

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IT COSTS NOTHING TO SAY SOMETHING KIND. EVEN LESS TO SHUT UP ALTOGETHER. — NATHAN FILLION

Scientists finally finish decoding entire human genome



In this April 14, 2003 file photo, Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, announces the successful completion of the human genome project in Bethesda, Md.

Associated Press

By LAURA UNGAR
AP Science Writer

Scientists say they have finally assembled the full genetic blueprint for human life, adding the missing pieces to a puzzle nearly completed two decades ago.

An international team described the first-ever sequencing of a complete human genome — the set of instructions to build and sustain a human being — in research published Thursday in the journal *Science*.

The previous effort, celebrated across the world, was incomplete because DNA sequencing technologies of the day weren't able to read certain parts of it. Even after updates, it was missing about 8% of the genome. "Some of the genes that make us uniquely human were actually in this 'dark matter of the genome' and they were totally missed," said Evan Eichler, a University of Washington researcher who participated in the current effort and the original Human Genome Project.

"It took 20-plus years, but we finally got it done."

Many including Eichler's own students thought it had been finished already. The human genome is made up of about 3.1 billion DNA subunits, pairs of chemical bases known by the letters A, C, G and T. Genes are strings of these

"I was teaching them, and they said, 'Wait a minute. Isn't this like the sixth time you guys have declared victory?' I said, 'No, this time we really, really did it!'"

Scientists said this full picture of the genome will give humanity a greater understanding of our evolution and biology while also opening the door to medical discoveries in areas like aging, neurodegenerative conditions, cancer and heart disease.

"We're just broadening our opportunities to understand human disease," said Karen Miga, an author of one of the six studies published Thursday.

The research caps off decades of work. The first draft of the human genome was announced in a White House ceremony in 2000 by leaders of two competing entities: an international publicly funded project led by an agency of the U.S. National Institutes of Health and a private company, Maryland-based Celera Genomics.

The human genome is made up of about 3.1 billion DNA subunits, pairs of chemical bases known by the letters A, C, G and T. Genes are strings of these

lettered pairs that contain instructions for making proteins, the building blocks of life. Humans have about 30,000 genes, organized in 23 groups called chromosomes that are found in the nucleus of every cell.

Before now, there were "large and persistent gaps that have been in our map, and these gaps fall in pretty important regions," Miga said.

Miga, a genomics researcher at the University of California-Santa Cruz, worked with Adam Phillips of the National Human Genome Research Institute to organize the team of scientists to start from scratch with a new genome with the aim of sequencing all of it, including previously missing pieces.

The group, named after the sections at the very ends of chromosomes, called telomeres, is known as the Telomere-to-Telomere, or T2T, consortium.

Their work adds new genetic information to the human genome, corrects previous errors and reveals long stretches of DNA known to play important roles in both evolution and disease. A version of the research was published last year before being reviewed by scientific peers.

"This is a major improvement, I would say, of the Human Genome Project," doubling its impact, said geneticist Ting Wang of the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, who was not involved in the research.

Eichler said some scientists used to think unknown areas contained "junk." Not him. "Some of us always believed there was gold in those hills," he said. Eichler is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press's health and science department.

Turns out that gold includes many important genes, he said, such as ones integral to making a person's brain bigger than a chimp's, with more neurons and connections. □

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Got a dime? Businesses seek Treasury help with coin shortage



Quarters, nickels, dimes and pennies are held in a bowl Thursday, March 31, 2022, in Tigard, Ore.

Associated Press

By FATIMA HUSSEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Got a dime you can spare? Coins are in short supply again.

Retailers, laundromats and other businesses that rely on coins want Americans to empty their piggy banks and look under couch cushions for extra change and "get coin moving."

A group of trade associations that represent individual businesses including banks, retail outlets, truck stops, grocery stores and more is asking the Treasury Department for more help convincing Americans to get coins back in circulation. The consequences of the circulation slowdown hit people who don't have an ability to pay for items

electronically, they say.

"If retailers are not able to offer change for cash purchases consumers who rely on cash will be vulnerable," the associations said in a letter to Treasury.

For example, people who do their laundry at coin laundry mats could have a harder time finding change to wash their clothes. And on a larger scale, people who don't have cash access aren't able to patronize certain card-only businesses.

It's not a coin shortage America faces, but a lack of circulation.

"We can't print our way out of this problem," said Austen Jensen, a senior vice president for government affairs at the Retail Industry Leaders Association.

Jensen's group, along with the American Bankers Association, National Association of Convenience Stores, and National Grocers Association, is trying to meet consumer demand and wants a new public campaign to increase coin circulation.

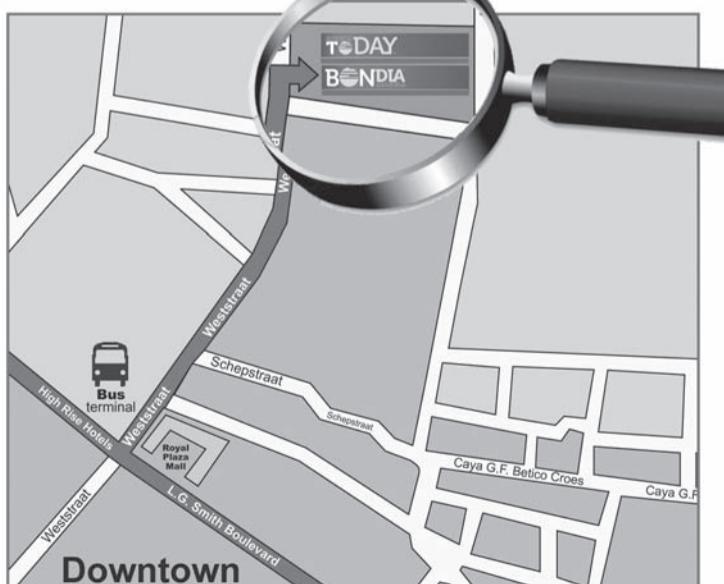
Jensen said his group is also encouraging member retailers to find creative ways to deal with the shortage of coins, including rounding-up purchases for charity promotions. And he says businesses with multiple locations could send coins from one store to another. This is not the first time during the pandemic that the issue of low coin circulation has arisen.

The coronavirus disrupted consumers' buying habits and shifted purchases largely to plastic cards to such an extent that in July 2020, the Federal Reserve restricted coin orders by financial institutions. □

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Will Smith's Oscars slap felt by comedians beyond Chris Rock

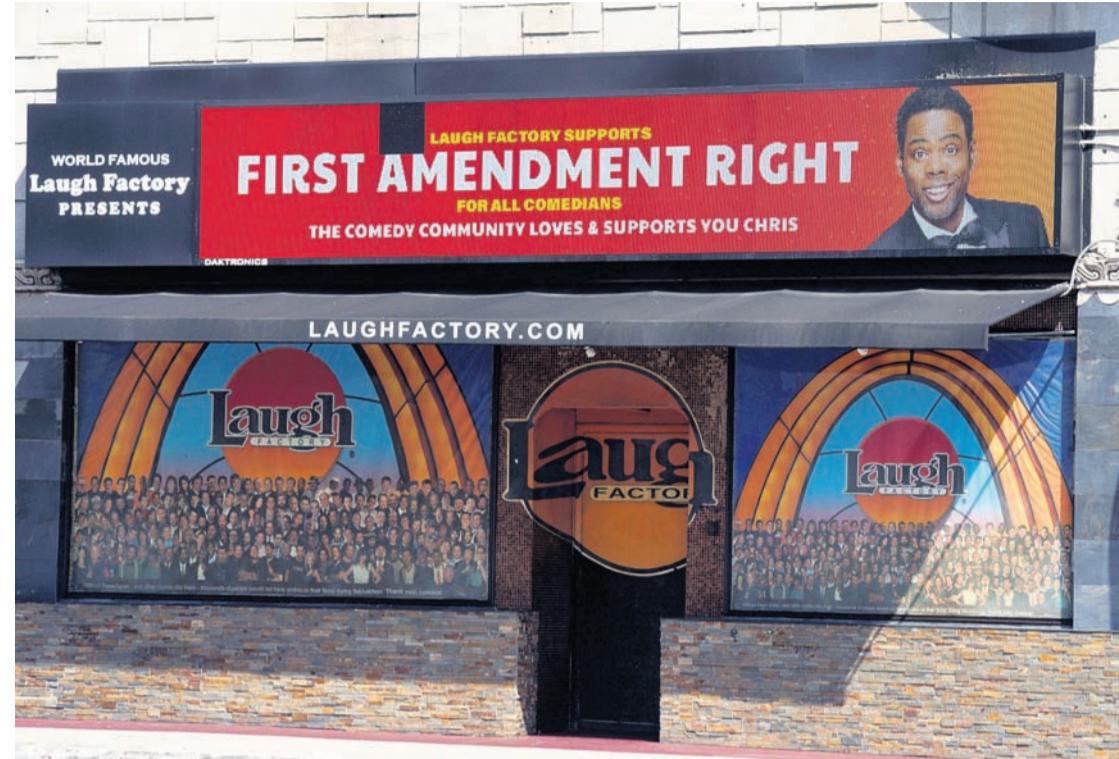
The Associated Press

When Will Smith slapped Chris Rock over an Oscars ceremony punchline, other comedians felt the sting.

"I know Chris and I know what it's like to be on a stage in front of an audience that doesn't like your material," said stand-up comedian Judy Gold. "But to be physically assaulted, that's a whole other thing. It felt like every comedian was smacked across the face. It really felt like that." Smith's act comes during a stressful time for comedy. While boundaries for humor constantly shift — think George Carlin's 1972 monologue on seven so-called "dirty words" banned by TV — comics say they have felt increased push-back from audiences and society.

Comedy great Dave Chappelle drew sharp criticism last year for what some deemed anti-transgender humor in his Netflix special "The Closer." Kathy Griffin's career was derailed in 2017 when she was photographed holding a mock-up of former President Donald Trump's head. Some comedians expressed concern that Smith's behavior might embolden other displeased audience members.

"No one went up to Chris Rock and said, 'Are you OK?'" Sheryl Underwood, co-host of "The Talk," said on the show Tuesday. "I'm going to say this as a comic, I am afraid now to get on a stage, because in my third show, when ev-



A message expressing support for comedian Chris Rock is displayed on the digital marquee of the Laugh Factory comedy club, Wednesday, March 30, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

eryone's been drinking, if you don't like my joke, do you now believe that you can get up and slap me? There's got to be accountability quicker."

Griffin tweeted that "now we all have to worry about who wants to be the next Will Smith in comedy clubs and theaters."

"Which is the worst crime here?" veteran comedian Gilbert Gottfried said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Chris Rock being physically assaulted? Or Chris Rock making a joke? That's it, pure and simple. He made a joke."

Dean Obeidallah, a lawyer and stand-up comic who hosts a show on the SiriusXM Progress channel, said

there is never "a place for a violent response to a joke" but doubted there would be copycat behavior. In his time in comedy clubs, he's seen yelling, screaming and, once, a glass thrown at somebody. But he's never seen a punch thrown, nor a comedian slapped.

"If someone were to strike a comedian, they're going to be prosecuted criminally. They don't have the privilege that Will Smith has," Obeidallah said.

The Los Angeles Police Department said Sunday that it was aware of the incident, but Rock had declined to file a police report. Smith stayed through the rest of the ceremony Sunday and received the

best-actor Oscar.

Gold said she's been confronted but never struck, and she knows other female comedians have faced difficult circumstances. "People have been getting on stage, people have thrown things," she said.

Comedian-actor Yama-neika Saunders calls Smith's behavior upsetting and Sunday a sad day for "two beloved Black men in entertainment." She also views what happened through the lens of a "Black woman in comedy."

"I'm constantly being threatened....by some man who doesn't like some (expletive) I said about being a woman, some white guy who doesn't like some (ex-

pletive) I said about being Black," she said.

Insult humor isn't new to high-profile ceremonies, which call on comics to liven up what can be tedious events. Ricky Gervais made a meal of celebrities at successive Golden Globe ceremonies, and they grin — or grimace — and bear it. The most famous bad sport: Trump at the 2011 White House correspondents' dinner, where he sat stone-faced during then-President Barack Obama's extended ribbing of him.

Rock wasn't the first to tweak Smith or wife Jada Pinkett Smith at Sunday's Oscars. Ceremony co-host Regina Hall made what appeared to be a veiled joke about their marriage in trying, unsuccessfully, to draw Smith into a comedy bit.

Rock's wisecrack was targeted at Pinkett Smith. "Jada, I love you. 'G.I. Jane 2,' can't wait to see it," the comedian said to Pinkett Smith, whose close-shaven head looked similar to Demi Moore's in the 1997 movie. Whether Rock was aware that she has a hair-loss condition, alopecia, is unknown, but Smith reacted with the smack and an angry warning to "keep my wife's name out your (expletive) mouth!"

A tearful Smith later accepted the top acting award for "King Richard," his somewhat remorseful speech eliciting a standing ovation from the Dolby Theatre crowd. □

Native Hawaiian hula teacher will appear on U.S. quarters



This undated photo provided by Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation shows the late Native Hawaiian hula teacher Edith Kanaka'ole.

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — The late Native Hawaiian hula teacher Edith Kanaka'ole is among five women who will be individually featured on U.S. quarters next year as part of a program that depicts notable women on the coins.

The U.S. Mint said Wednesday the other side of each quarter will show George Washington.

It described Kanaka'ole, who died in 1978, as a composer, chanter, dancer, teacher and entertainer.

"Her mo'olelo, or stories, served to rescue aspects of Hawaiian history, customs and traditions that were disappearing due to the cultural bigotry of the time," it said in a news release.

The Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation in Hilo, which was established in 1990 to perpetuate her and her husband Luka Kanaka'ole's teachings, said she has been recognized as "the preeminent practitioner of modern Hawaiian culture and language." The U.S.

Mint said the other four women to appear on the coin next year were: Bessie Coleman, the first African American and first Native American woman pilot; Eleanor Roosevelt, first lady and author; Jovita Idár, the Mexican American journalist and activist; and Maria Tallchief, who was America's first prima ballerina.

This year, the program is issuing coins featuring five other women, including poet Maya Angelou and astronaut Sally Ride. □

Kupcho, Lee share early lead in last major at Mission Hills

By JOHN NICHOLSON

AP Sports Writer

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif.

(AP) — Jennifer Kupcho and Minjee Lee shared the lead in The Chevron Championship at 6-under 66 after morning play Thursday in the first round of the major tournament's final edition at Mission Hills.

Defending champion Patty Tavatanakit and 2013 winner Inbee Park were among the afternoon starters in the event ending a half-century run in the mountain-framed desert oasis.

Unable to find a sponsor willing to remain at Mission Hills, the tournament that started in 1972 as the Colgate-Dinah Shore Winner's Circle and became a major in 1983 is shifting to Houston next year under a six-year deal with Chevron. Kupcho birdied Nos. 11-14

in sunny and calm conditions to get to 8 under, then bogeyed the next two holes. She birdied four of the first five holes and finished with nine birdies and three bogeys.

"I really like the layout of this golf course, the beautiful shape that it's in every year," Kupcho said. "It always is so fun to be here, so just taking advantage of



Jennifer Kupcho tees off on the 17th hole during the Chevron Championship golf tournament Thursday, March 31, 2022, in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

Associated Press

how much I like the course and the atmosphere."

Winless on the LPGA Tour, the 24-year-old from Colorado won the 2018 NCAA individual title for Wake Forest and took the inaugural Augusta National Women's Amateur the following year. She arrived at Mission Hills early after missing the cut last week at Aviara in Carlsbad.

"Honestly I just don't like that course last week," Kupcho said. "It doesn't set up for my eye, so I really didn't think much of it. I just used the two days that I did have on the weekend to come here and practice."

Lee birdied all four par 5s in a bogey-free round.

"It was perfect," Lee said. "Not like a breath of wind when we played. Maybe

just a tiny bit. But conditions are great. Putting greens are rolling real nice. I don't think you can get better than that."

The 25-year-old Australian, ranked fourth in the world, won the Evian Championship last summer for her first major title and sixth LPGA Tour victory.

"I know I have one under my belt, but I do want a little bit

more," Lee said. "I just think I have a little bit more belief in myself and my game so I can be a little bit more comfortable just hitting the shots that I choose."

Anna Nordqvist, Caroline Masson and Pajaree Ananarukarn were tied for third at 68, and 2014 winner Lexi Thompson was another stroke back with Lauren Stephenson.

Thompson marveled at the conditions on the course she first played as a 14-year-old amateur.

"I've never seen it this good," Thompson said. "It always surprises me every year. It's always better. But the greens are amazing. I'm one to putt and usually aim at things along the way, and there is just not an imperfection on greens to aim at. It's a good problem."

Thompson played alongside top-ranked Jin Young Ko, the 2019 winner who failed to make a birdie in a 74 that ended her streak of under-par rounds at 34.

"I was hitting lots of great shots, but my putting wasn't good on the green," Ko said. "I couldn't see the break as much or speed, everything was wrong. I don't know what happened." □

MLB, players keep automatic runners in extras for 2022

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball finalized the rules change Thursday to bring back automatic runners in extra innings for a third straight season.

Despite an easing of pandemic restrictions, MLB and the players' association agreed to keep the controversial rule that starts each team with a runner on second base during extra innings for the 2022 regular season.

The agreement regarding on-field rules modifications also includes expanding active rosters from 26 players to 28 from opening day on April 7 through May 1 this year, due to the delayed start of spring training.

Another new rule benefits Angels two-way star Shohei Ohtani. With the designat-

ed hitter adopted in both leagues, pitchers who start games in the batting order can remain in the game as a DH after leaving the mound. A DH can also enter the game to pitch. That change will apply to multiple seasons.

"The expansion of the designated hitter and giving two-way players enhanced flexibility to showcase their talents will benefit the game for the foreseeable future," union director of player services Kevin Slowey said in a statement.

"The roster and extra-inning adjustments will also serve to protect the health and safety of players during what will be a unique 2022 season." The "zombie" runner modification was applied to the 2020 and 2021

regular seasons as part of adjustments due to COVID-19. There were 78 extra-inning games during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, and the longest by innings were a pair of 13-inning contests at Houston, won by the Los Angeles Dodgers on July 29 and by Oakland on Aug. 7. Every previous season since 1901 had at least one game of 15 innings or longer.

There were 233 extra-inning games last year, and the longest was the Dodgers' 16-inning win at the San Diego Padres on Aug. 25.

The modification for 2020 and 2021 that shortened doubleheaders to scheduled seven-inning games was not continued for 2022. Active rosters will be 28 from opening day through May



Los Angeles Angels' Shohei Ohtani strikes out against the Oakland Athletics during the third inning of a spring training baseball game, Monday, March 28, 2022, in Tempe, Ariz.

Associated Press

1; 26 from May 2 through Aug. 31; and 28 for the rest of the regular season. Last season, the limit was 26 from opening day through Aug. 31, then 28.

Rookie qualifications go-

ing forward will remain the same as in 2021, when September days were not excluded toward the threshold of 45 days for the exhaustion of rookie status in future seasons. □

Arians retires as Bucs' coach, Bowles promoted to top spot

By FRED GOODALL

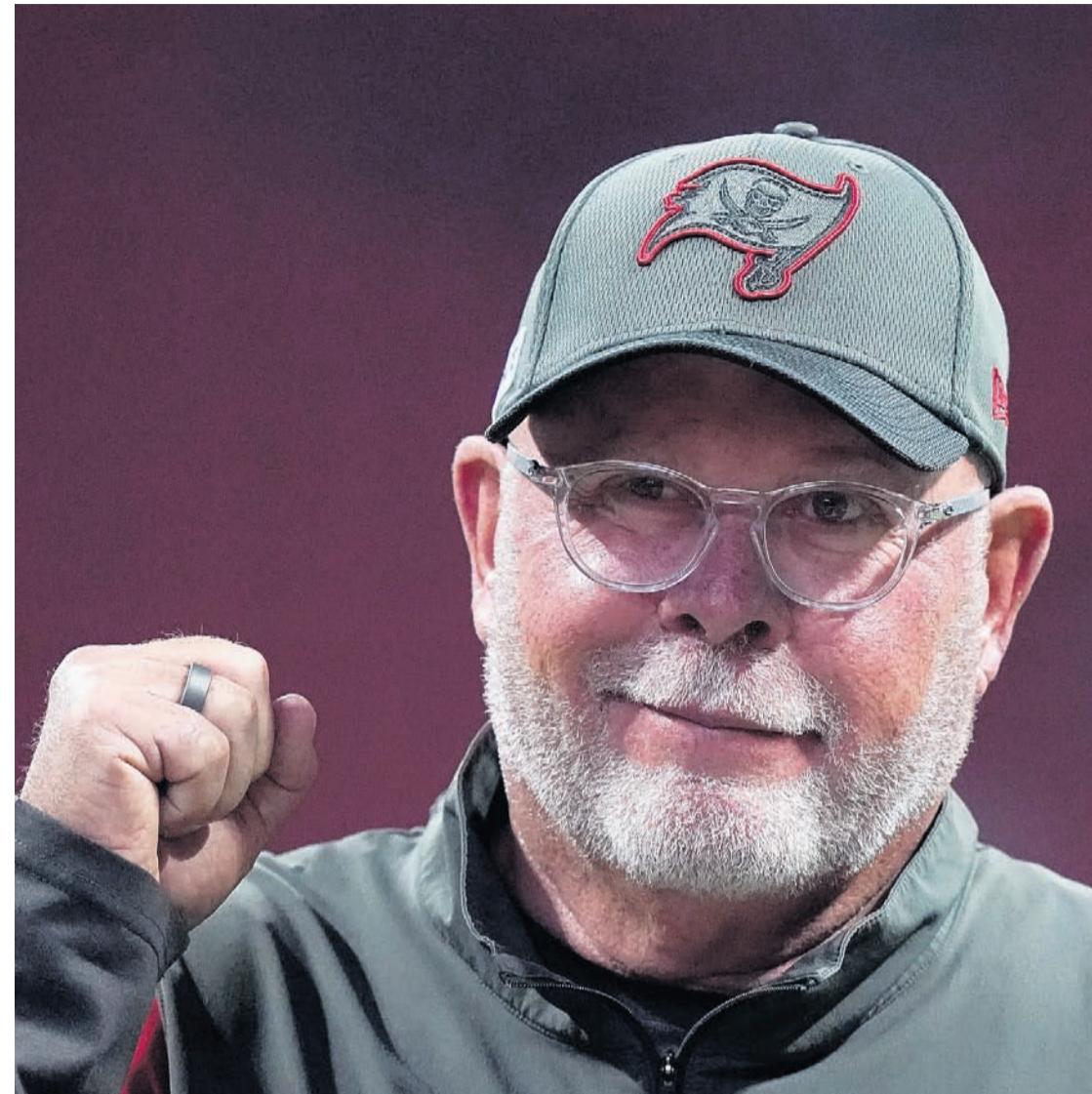
TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Bruce Arians unexpectedly retired as coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, a stunning move Wednesday night that the 69-year-old who guided the team to its second Super Bowl title says is not related to health. It's the second major retirement announcement for the Bucs this offseason, following Tom Brady's announcement in February that he was ending his career. Brady, a seven-time Super Bowl champion quarterback, returned 40 days later, saying he would return for a 23rd season and noting he had "unfinished business."

But instead of Arians, Brady will be playing for Todd Bowles after the defensive coordinator was promoted as the coach's successor.

Arians, a two-time cancer survivor, stepped down as coach of the Arizona Cardinals due to medical concerns in 2017, only to be lured back to the sideline by the then-struggling Bucs two years later. This time, he said, he exits feeling the best he has in "many years" and is looking forward to transitioning into a front-office position working with general manager Jason Licht.

"This team is in a much better place than it was three years ago due to Jason's great work and the Glazer family's commitment to winning," Arians said in a lengthy statement issued by the team.

"I want to focus on what I can give back to this incredible game that has provided so much for me and my family," Arians added. "I really began thinking about my personal transition plan earlier this offseason. I wanted to ensure when I walked away that Todd Bowles would have



Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach Bruce Arians walks along the sideline before the team's NFL football game against the Atlanta Falcons on Dec. 5, 2021, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

the best opportunity to succeed."

Arians, who will turn 70 this coming season, coached the Bucs to the Super Bowl title in the 2020 season — Brady's first with Tampa Bay. The Bucs were 31-18 in Arians' three seasons there and he was 80-48-1 in eight years as a head coach overall when adding in five seasons with the Cardinals from 2013 to 2017.

NBC Sports and the Los Angeles Times first reported Arians' decision and that Bowles would be replace him.

"I have spent most of the last 50 years of my life on the sidelines as a football coach in one form or another," Arians said. "I love

football. I love the relationships, the strategy, the competition — everything. It has been one hell of a ride, but I know this is the right time for me to make this transition."

Bowles becomes the sixth minority head coach currently in the NFL, joining Pittsburgh's Mike Tomlin, Washington's Ron Rivera, the New York Jets' Robert Saleh, Houston's Lovie Smith and Miami's Mike McDaniel. He also is the fourth Black coach in Bucs' history, joining Tony Dungy, Raheem Morris and Smith. Brady, in an Instagram post Wednesday night, said Arians was a major part of his decision to play for Tampa Bay and that he'll be "for-

ever grateful."

"You are an incredible man and coach, and it was a privilege to play for you," Brady wrote. "You are a true NFL legend and pioneer for all the work you have done to make the league more diverse and inclusive. Smart, tough, and loyal are a few of the words to describe your style. I will always remember the conversations we had when you recruited me two years ago and all of the things we discussed came true."

There was no public indication at the NFL's annual meetings on the Atlantic side of the state in Palm Beach, Florida, that such a move was coming. Arians was there, briefly, and did an interview with NFL Network about what the team would have done to replace Brady if the quarterback hadn't changed his mind. Licht addressed reporters for a short time during the meetings, as did team co-owner Joel Glazer.

Arians did not do a group interview there, with the team saying he was leaving for personal reasons. He was also one of the four coaches who opted to not be part of the annual group photo of all NFL head coaches at the meetings.

Bowles was an interim head coach in Miami for three games in 2011, and went 24-40 in four seasons with the New York Jets from 2015 through 2018.

"I am appreciative of the Glazer family and Jason Licht for having faith in me to take on this role, and to Coach Arians for his support and guidance over the past four decades," Bowles said. "Tampa has become home for my family, and we are excited to remain part of this community for years to come. ... I am eager to get started with our players, coaching staff, and front office in preparation for the 2022 season."

Bowles was Arizona's defensive coordinator for a portion of Arians' tenure with the Cardinals. He re-united with his old boss in Tampa Bay after the Jets fired Bowles following the 2018 season.

Arians said timing of his decision to step away — along with Brady's return — should serve Bowles well.

"So many head coaches come into situations where they are set up for failure, and I didn't want that for Todd," Arians said. "Tom's decision to come back, along with Jason and his staff doing another great job of keeping the core of this team intact during free agency, confirmed for me that it was the right time to pass the torch."

Licht said he's excited to continue working with the former coach.

"Bruce established a culture here that set the foundation for a Super Bowl championship," Licht said. "In my opinion, he is a Hall of Fame coach, so it is difficult for our football team to lose that type of leader. However, I am excited to have him continuing his contributions to our franchise in his new capacity."